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English

Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Temeriae

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Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Temeriae, which roughly translates to "Annals or Chronicles Celebrating Temerian Rule", is a tome written by Jarre sometime after the Second Northern War with Nilfgaard which talks about the Battle of Brenna.

Text

> *Close by that field where the fierce battle took place, where almost the whole force of the North clashed with almost the entire might of the Nilfgaardian invader, were two fishing villages. Old Bottoms and Brenna. Because, however, Brenna was burned down to the ground at that time, it caught on at first to cu*
> *Bottoms'. Today, nonetheless, no one says anything other than the 'Battle of Brenna',*

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and there are two reasons for that. Primo, after being rebuilt Brenna is today a large and prosperous settlement, while Old Bottoms did not resist the ravages of time and all trace of it was covered over by nettles, couch grass and burdock. Secundo, somehow that name did not befit that famous, memorable and, at the same time, tragic battle. For, just ask yourself: here was a battle in which more than thirty thousand men laid down their lives, and if Bottoms was not enough, they had to be Old as well.
Thus in all the historical and military literature it became customary only to write the Battle of Brenna–both in the North, and in Nilfgaardian sources, of which, nota bene, there are many more than ours.

The Venerable Jarre of Ellander the Elder.
Annales seu Cronicae Incliti Regni Temeriae

location 4276, The Lady of the Lake

Whoever knows those parts can easily imagine the whole thing, while to those who are less well travelled I shall reveal that the left wing of the royal army reached the place where today the settlement of Brenna is located. At the time of the battle there was no settlement, for the year before it had been sent up in smoke by the Squirrel elves and had burned down to the ground. For there, on the left wing, stood the Redanian royal corps, which the Count of Ruyter was commanding. And there were eight thousand foot and frontline horse in that corps.
The centre of the royal formation stood beside a hill later to be named Gallows Hill. There, on the hill, stood with their detachment King Foltest and Constable Jan Natalis, having a prospect of the whole battlefield from high up. Here the main forces of our army were gathered–twelve thousand brave Temerian and Redanian infantrymen formed in four great squares, protected by ten cavalry companies, standing right at the northern end of the fishpond, called Golden Pond by local folk. The central formation, meanwhile, had a reserve regiment in the second line–three thousand Vizimian and Mariborian foot, over which Voivode Bronibor held command. From the southern edge of Golden Pond, however, up to the row of fishponds and a bend in the River Chotla, to the marches a mile wide, stood the right wing of our army, the Volunteer Regiment formed of Mahakam dwarves, eight companies of light horse and companies of the eminent Free Mercenary Company. The condottiero Adam Pangratt and dwarf Barclay Els commanded the right wing.
Field Marshal Menno Coehoorn deployed the Nilfgaardian Army opposite them, about a mile or two away, on a bare field beyond the forest. Iron-hard men stood there like a black wall, regiment by regiment, company by company, squadron by squadron, endless it seemed, as far as the eye could see. And, from the forest of standards and spears, one could deduce that it was not just a broad but a deep array. For it was an army of six and forty thousand, which few knew about at that time, and just as well, because at the sight of that Nilfgaardian might many hearts sank somewhat.
And hearts started to beat beneath the breastplates of even the bravest, started to beat like hammers, for it became patent that a heavy and bloody battle would soon begin and many of those who stood in that array would not see the sunset.

The morning was cloudy, but the sun broke through the clouds and its height clearly signalled the passing of the hours. A wind got up; pennants fluttered and flapped like flocks of birds taking flight. And Nilfgaard stood on, stood on, until everyone began to

wonder why Marshal Menno Coehoorn did not give his order to march forward ...

Location 4348, The Lady of the Lake

... Cruel and bloody fighting then began on the left wing and the centre of the line, but here, though great was Nilfgaard's fierceness and impetus, their charge broke on the royal army like an ocean wave breaks on a rock. For here stood the select soldiers, the valiant Mariborian, Vizimian and Tretorian armoured companies, and also the dogged landsknechts, the professional soldiers of fortune, whom cavalry could not frighten. And thus they fought, truly like the sea against a rocky cliff, thus continued the battle in which you could not guess who had the upper hand, for although the waves endlessly beat against the rock, not weakening, and they only fell back to strike anew, the rock stood on, as it had always stood, still visible among the turbulent waves.
The battle unfolded in a different way on the right wing of the royal army. Like an old sparrowhawk that knows where to stoop and peck its prey to death, so Field Marshal Menno Coehoorn knew where to aim his blows. Clenching in his iron fist his select divisions, the Deithwen lancers and the armoured Ard Feainn, he struck at the junction of the line above Golden Pond, where the companies from Brugge stood. Although the Bruggeans resisted heroically, they turned out to be more weakly accoutred, both in armour and in spirit, than their foes. They did not weather the Nilfgaardian advance. Two companies of the Free Company under the old condottiero Adam Pangratt went to their aid and held back Nilfgaard, paying a severe price in blood. But the awful threat of being surrounded stared the dwarves of the Volunteer Regiment standing on the right flank in the face, and the severing of the array imperilled the whole royal army.

Jan Natalis, nonetheless, attentive as a crane, had noticed the menacing danger, and understood in an instant which way the wind was blowing. And without delay sent a messenger to the dwarves with an order for Colonel Els ...

Location 4544, The Lady of the Lake

Marshal Coehoorn came to nothing. His flanking troop was stopped by the heroic Vizimian infantry under Voivode Bronibor, paying in blood for his heroism. And at the moment the Vizimians resisted, Nilfgaard fell into confusion on the left wing–some of them began to take flight, others to pull together and defend themselves in groups, surrounded on all sides. Soon after the same thing happened on the right wing, where the doggedness of the dwarves and condottieri finally overcame Nilfgaard's assault. A single great cry of triumph went up along the entire front, and a new spirit entered the royal knights. And the spirit fell in the Nilfgaardians, their hands weakened, and our men began to shell them like peas so loudly it echoed.
And Field Marshal Menno Coehoorn understood that the battle was lost, saw the brigades perishing and falling into confusion around him.

And then his officers and knights ran to him, giving him a fresh horse, calling for him to flee and save his own life. But a fearless heart beat in the breast of the Nilfgaardian field marshal. 'That will not do,' he called, pushing away the reins held out towards him. 'It will not do for me to flee like a coward from the field on which so many good men under my command have fallen for the emperor.' And the doughty Menno Coehoorn added ...

Location 4935, The Lady of the Lake

And thus the might of Nilfgaard was reduced to dust on the Brenna battlefields, and an end was put to the march of the Empire northwards. Either by being killed or taken captive the Empire lost four and forty thousand men at the Battle of Brenna. The flower of the knighthood and the élite cavalry fell. Leaders of the stature of Menno Coehoorn, Braibant, de Mellis-Stoke, van Lo, Tyrconnel, Eggebracht and others whose names have not survived in our archives, fell, were taken prisoner or disappeared without trace.

Thus did Brenna become the beginning of the end. But it behoves me to write that that battle was but a small stone in the building, and superficial would have been its importance had the fruits of the victory not been wisely taken advantage of. It behoves us to recall that instead of resting on his laurels and bursting with pride, and awaiting honours and homage, Jan Natalis headed south almost without stopping. The cavalry troop under Adam Pangratt and Julia Abatemarco destroyed two divisions of the Third Army that had brought belated relief to Menno Coehoorn, routing them such that nec nuntius cladis. At news of this, the rest of the Centre Army Group took miserable flight and fled in haste to the far side of the Yaruga, and since Foltest and Natalis were on their heels, the imperial forces lost entire convoys and all their siege engines with which, in their hubris, they had meant to capture Vizima, Gors Velen and Novigrad.

And like an avalanche rolling down from the mountains, becoming covered in more and more snow and becoming greater, so also Brenna caused more and more severe results for Nilfgaard. Hard times came for the Verden Army under Duke de Wett, whom the corsairs from Skellige and King Ethain of Cidaris sorely vexed in a guerrilla war. When, meanwhile, de Wett learned about Brenna, when news reached him that King Foltest and Jan Natalis were marching briskly to him, he immediately ordered the trumpeting of the retreat and fled to Cintra, strewing the escape route with corpses, because at the news of the Nilfgaardian defeats an insurrection in Verden flared up anew. Only in the undefeated strongholds of Nastróg, Rozróg and Bodróg did powerful garrisons remain, for which reason only after the Peace of Cintra did they leave honourably and with their standards intact.

Whereas in Aedirn, the tidings about Brenna led to the feuding kings Demavend and Henselt shaking each other's right hands and taking arms against Nilfgaard together. The East Army Group, which under the command of Duke Ardal aep Dahy marched towards the Pontar valley, did not manage to challenge the two allied kings. Strengthened by reinforcements from Redania and Queen Meve's guerrillas, who had cruelly plundered Nilfgaard, Demavend and Henselt drove Ardal aep Dahy all the way to Aldersberg. Duke Ardal wanted to give battle, but by a strange twist of fate he suddenly fell ill, having eaten something. He came down with the colic and diarrhoea miserere, and thus in two days he died in great pain. And Demavend and Henselt, without delay, attacked the Nilfgaardians, also there at Aldersberg, evidently for the sake of historical justice, and they routed them in a decisive battle, though Nilfgaard still had a significant numerical advantage. Thus do spirit and artistry usually triumph over dull and brutal force.

It behoves me to write about one more thing: what exactly happened to Menno Coehoorn himself at the Battle of Brenna no one knows. Some say: he fell and his body, unrecognised, was buried in a common grave. Others say: he escaped with his

life, but fearing imperial wrath did not return to Nilfgaard, but hid in Brokilon among the dryads, and there became a hermit, letting his beard grow down to the ground. And there shortly after expired amidst his worries.

A story circulates among simple folk that the marshal returned at night to the Brenna battlefield and walked among the burial mounds, wailing 'Give me back my legions!', until finally he hanged himself on an aspen spike on the hill, called Gibbet Hill because of that. And at night one can happen upon the ghost of the celebrated marshal among other apparitions that commonly haunt the battlefield.

Location 5011, The Lady of the Lake

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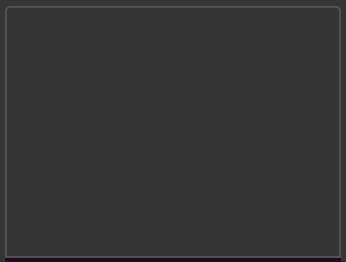

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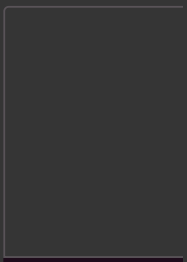

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